

Fear: Losing Control, Finding Trust

This week marks the start of a short series on major emotions: fear, anger, sadness, and guilt. I'm convinced that every emotion has a time and place in our lives. Even passages that seem to teach against, after careful consideration, confirm that they exist. For example: "Be angry and do not sin." It's actually not telling you to avoid anger. Or James, when he wrote, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." Slow to anger doesn't mean no anger. Slow to speak doesn't mean no speech. What about what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth after hearing of their repentance? **2 Corinthians 7:9-11** "As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point, you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter." **Was Jesus never angry?**

Today, we begin with fear, and it has many angles. My primary focus is not on the fear we should all have towards God, also known as reverence. **Hebrews 5:7**, "In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence." Some translations accurately say, "because of His godly fear." Nor am I discussing the fear one has towards God because of his/her sin. We see this in the beginning, after the sin of Adam and Eve, when they hid from God, and Adam was afraid because he was naked. That kind of fear is not what God wants for us. I'll remind us of **1 John 4:18**, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love." God wants us to be secure and without fear of His condemnation. No, today we're considering the fear we experience caused by others or various events. We're asking, "What's going on? what am I afraid of? What am I doing? What should I do?"

Negative Examples:

- Moses, after killing the Egyptian (**Exodus 2:11-15**)
- Israel, after scouting out the Promised Land (**Numbers 13-14**)
- David, after fleeing from Saul to Achish (**1 Samuel 21:10-15**)
- Elijah, after hearing Jezebel's threat (**1 Kings 19:1-3**)
- Habakkuk, after hearing of Babylon's arrival (**Habakkuk 1-2**)
- The disciples, after seeing the storm (**Mark 4:35-38**)
- Peter, after Jesus' rebuke in the garden (**Matthew 26:47-56**)

What's Fear Saying To Us?

- Something/someone is going to hurt me! (physically, emotionally, etc.)
- I'm going to lose something/someone! (health, relationship, position, power, material, confidence, reputation, etc.)
- **I'M LOSING CONTROL!**
- Would we fear anything if we had total **CONTROL** and **CERTAINTY**? (This is what makes us so anxious, by the way - we want 100% certainty, but life doesn't work that way).
- So, are we saying that fear is always bad? Is there nothing good that comes from fear?

Positive Examples:

- Moses comes back home (**Exodus 3ff**)
- Israel takes the Promised Land (**Joshua 3ff**)
- David cries out to God (**Psalm 55:4-7, 16-19; 56**)
- Elijah finds comfort on God's mountain (**1 Kings 19:4-18**)
- Habakkuk begins to understand God's perspective (**Habakkuk 3:16-19**)
- The disciples replaced one fear for another (**Mark 4:39-41**)
- Peter found a way to face persecutors (**Acts 5:27-42**)
- Fear, in itself, isn't wrong. However, it can cause you to run and hide and/or produce an incorrect view of God, OR cause you to run to Him with absolute trust.
- Did Jesus fear going to the cross in **John 12:27**? Was not His soul troubled? Are you saying He wasn't afraid in the Garden? Yet, "Not My will, but Yours, be done." This is the reverence that Jesus had towards God. When we learn to be like Jesus, we will learn to trust in God, thereby growing in the virtue of reverence toward God!

Fear, even of others or something, isn't the sin. It's the taking over of fear that paralyzes us, causes us to run, and puts into question the faithfulness of God. That's what we're looking at today. Jesus experienced fear, yet without sin. Jesus also experienced anger, without sin. He experienced sadness, without sin. That's not what we're worried about. Today, we're asking, "What are you worried about? Are you avoiding something/someone? What direction are you headed (towards or away from God), and has this taken over your life?"